



H.R. 2787: the Veterans-Specific Education for Tomorrow's Medical Doctors (VET MD) Act

Background:

According to testimony from the Partnership for Public Service in March 2016, VA's considerable recruitment and retention issues are worsened by an aging workforce that is increasingly retirement-eligible, creating concerns about the Department's ability to continue providing high-quality benefits and services to future generations of veterans. The Committee believes that improving the recruitment and retention of younger employees is critical to VA's continued success. However, VA has historically performed poorly in comparison to other Federal agencies in hiring younger employees. VA has an important medical professional training mission that could be leveraged to recruit prospective young providers to VA service.

H.R. 2787 would direct the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to carry out a three-year pilot program beginning no later than August 15, 2020, in at least five regionally diverse VA medical centers to provide undergraduate students a clinical observation experience within VA. The purpose of this pilot program is to increase the awareness, knowledge and empathy of future medical professionals toward medical conditions common to veterans; increase the diversity of the recruitment pool of future VA physicians; provide a diverse clinical observation experience commensurate with the standard expectations for medical school applications; and expand clinical observation opportunities for all students by encouraging students of all backgrounds to consider a career in medicine.

The Message:

- VA's considerable recruitment and retention issues are worsened by an aging workforce that is increasingly retirement-eligible, creating concerns about the Department's ability to continue providing high-quality benefits and services to future generations of veterans. Recruitment and retention of younger employees is critical to VA's continued success; however, VA has historically performed poorly in comparison to other Federal agencies in hiring younger employees.
- This legislation will require VA to carry out a pilot program to provide undergraduate students with clinical observation experience within VA to increase knowledge of future medical professionals toward medical conditions common to veterans.